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T.V.F. BROGAN; R. FALCO

GENRE. Most broadly, the term *genre* designates the long and controversial hist. of literary classification from antiquity to the present. The practice of grouping individual texts into distinct categories, called *genres*, is common to writers and readers of all periods. But these genres are themselves contingent, historical. Writers' tendencies and readers' expectations regarding the identifying features of a particular genre—theme, *style, *form, vocabulary, *syntax, *address, *allusion, morphology, medium, and so forth—are highly variable, both synchronically and diachronically. While debate over the nature and attributes of particular genres sometimes devolves into a chicken-or-egg squabble (which comes first, the generic category or the individual work?), it is also one of the chief engines of lit. hist. Thinking about lit. in terms of genre both piques and gratifies the human appetite for classification—the urge to identify unidentical things. But the dynamism of generic change also drives powerful narratives of difference and autonomy. We may think of a text as an expressive (authorial) or communicative (textual) intention endowed with a form that makes its meaning intelligible to others, even across great distances of time and space. At the same time, we recognize it to be a set of discursive effects not fully reducible to recognizable intentions or formal rules. Genres insist on horizons of meaning and expectation (Jauss), but they also give rise, through each act of reading, to dialectics and questions (Conte 1986).

Genre means "kind" or "sort" and is etymologically related to words such as *gender*, *genus*, and *beget*. Not surprisingly, texts in generic groupings are often understood to possess a kin-like relation to one another. Texts in the grouping known as "epic," e.g., are commonly said to "belong" to that genre, very much as if it were a family or clan. There has been a wide variety of genealogical and biological models of generic change, from J. W. Goethe's organicism, to Ferdinand Brunetière's speciation, to Franco Moretti's stemmatism. Some—Brunetière is the chief example—have rightly been faulted for thinking too strictly in terms of naturalistic categories. But the work of recent critics as different from one another in kind as Fowler, Kristeva, and McKeon attests to the continuing viability of biological analogies for a wide variety of rhetorical, discursive, historicist, and materialist theorizations of genre that are all diachronic and antiessentialist. Even a genre theorist as profoundly skeptical of communicative intention as Jacques Derrida nevertheless speaks of genres in terms of a more generalized sociality. Like him, many readers prefer to think of a text as "participating in" rather than "belonging to" a particular genre.

Belonging, participation, and other anthropomorphisms of genre, such as miscegenation, locomotion, sterility, and even death, find a precursor in Aristotle, who, in his *Poetics* (4th c. BCE), credits the differentiation of poetic genres to differences not only in poetic objects but in poets' own characters: the kind of person you are (e.g., superior, serious, noble vs. inferior, base, vulgar) dictates, Aristotle (following Plato) reasoned, the kind of poem you will write. This characterological determinism did not uniformly dictate cl. poetic practice, which reflects more freely and self-consciously made decisions about what and how to write. But such associations between genre and human nature, behavior, and relationship nevertheless abounded in antiquity and persist in much later expressivist thinking about genre and its implications for literary studies. The mod. aestheticization of the sapphic fragment as *"lyric," for instance, has its origins in the ancient reification of the emotional timbre of the poet Sappho's voice.

What postromantics habitually call Sappho's "lyrics," however, do not find their original theorization in either Plato or Aristotle, to whom centuries of trad., as we will see, have confusingly attributed the critical establishment of a trio of "major" or "basic" genres: *epic, *dramatic, and lyric (cf. Hegel). The lyric—when characterized as poetry that is neither chiefly narrative (epic) nor chiefly imitative (dramatic), but rather directly expressive of the poet's own thoughts and feelings—is, in fact, precisely that which is absent or excluded from Aristotle's system. The genre system proper to Aristotle comprises the object (either the actions of superior characters or the actions of inferior characters) and mode (either narrative or dramatic) of poetic address. The four possible combinations are tragedy (superior-dramatic), epic (superior-narrative), comedy (inferior-dramatic), and parody (inferior-narrative). The two genres that matter most to Aristotle are epic and, above all, *tragedy. He gives *comedy and *parody short shrift, and what later theorists call "lyric" is nowhere to be found in the *Poetics*. The lit. of antiquity is full of types of poems—incl. *elegies, *odes, *epigrams, *epithalamia, and *epinikia—that,

since the 16th c., have generally been classified as lyric genres. But this is a mod. classification, not an Aristotelian or aboriginal or "natural" one.

Many mod. inheritors of the *Poetics*, incl. major poets and theorists of the Ren. who got their Aristotle channeled largely through Horace's *Ars poetica* (1st c. BCE), were intensely devoted to further, more accurately construed fundamentals of Aristotelian genre theory, which included an emphasis on structural *unity and *mimesis, as well as a sense of literary kinds as both fixed in their rules and finite in their number. This devotion persisted through, and even beyond, the neoclassical era. Yet from Dante and Ludovico Ariosto to Ben Jonson (himself one of Horace's many Ren. trans.), John Dryden, Alexander Pope, and, much later, Matthew Arnold, some of the strongest advocates of cl. *decorum nevertheless insisted on maintaining a critical relation to it—reevaluating received rules and deviating from them in keeping with specific aesthetic or social goals, with the perception of a generally advancing understanding of the world, the object of poetic mimesis. As Pope puts it in his *Essay on Criticism* (1711),

> Learn hence for Ancient *Rules* a just Esteem;
> To copy *Nature* is to copy *Them*.
> Some Beauties yet, no Precepts can declare,
> For there's a *Happiness* as well as *Care*.
> *Musick* resembles *Poetry*, in each
> Are *nameless Graces* which no Methods teach,
> And which a *Master-Hand* alone can reach.
> If, where the *Rules* not far enough extend,
> (Since Rules were made but to promote their End)
> Some Lucky LICENCE answers to the full
> Th' Intent propos'd, *that License* is a *Rule*.

Pope's "lucky license" seems to anticipate later flowerings of arguments against inflexible and prescriptive concepts of genre—e.g., the individualistic arguments closely associated with the rise of continental and Brit. *romanticism. The late 18th and early 19th cs. saw an expansion and liberalization of genre theory and crit., an influential positing of open rather than closed generic systems. Many romantic writers felt that any historically determined set of fixed categories imposed on fresh poetic production was inadequate to new, dynamic theories of consciousness and growing confidence in the autonomy of aesthetic judgment. As human consciousness changed, they reasoned, new genres would continue to emerge. Other poets and theorists went even further, strongly resisting generic systematization of any kind (cf. Curran, Rajan). Although the idea that there exist only certain fixed, transhistorical genres has *never* been accepted without controversy, these romantic, post-Kantian devels. would be esp. consequential in the ongoing, contentious shifts in genre theory—shifts esp. visible beginning in the late 18th c.—away from taxonomics and toward *hermeneutics. Static taxonomics was largely rejected in favor of various competing historical models of generic devel. and transformation. And the principles of generic decorum that Aristotle and esp.

Horace insisted on as normative standards linking the qualitative evaluation of poetry to the realm of human conduct would never regain their former influence.

This historical change is more comprehensively reflected, in part, in the transition from prescriptive models of genre (how poetry *ought* to be written) to descriptive-prospective models (how poetry *has been* and *may yet be* written). But this transition is not simply diachronic, no straightforward triumph of the mod. over the ancient. For, although it was Horace, and not Derrida, who coined the term "the law of genre" and although he insisted in his *Ars poetica* that mixed genres were monstrous violations of generic purity, yet Horace's own poetic practice, as Farrell demonstrates, is a thick forest of generic hybridization. Cl. poetry itself, as the example of Horace makes plain, frequently destabilizes cl. norms of genre. Indeed, the lack of congruence between theory and practice is the energizing, often conflicted condition of emergence for authors' individual works and for the historical appearance and transformation, in every period, of generic norms and expectations.

Still, for the sprawling Lat. and vernacular lits. of the Middle Ages, there were little anxious reflection and debate on the priorities of cl. poetics, such as would ensue from the rediscovery of Aristotle's *Poetics* in the early 16th c. Cl. terms persisted, but without much normative force; and they were supplemented by new terms, such as *vision*, *legend*, and *romance*. Yet there was no free-for-all. Many aspects of ancient rhet. and poetics were transmitted and adapted as schemata. And by the 13th c., the med. obsession with classification had focused its concentrated attention on Aristotle's recently translated works on logic, politics, ethics, and zoology. Moreover, both Christian dogma and Christian discourse entailed complex thematic and structural links across late Lat. Christian antiquity and the Middle Ages. Fowler, e.g., points to the extensive modulation of *allegory at the crossings of Christian and non-Christian canons. And Jauss provides a general warning against the retrospective imposition of a distinction between "spiritual" and "worldly" genres, pointing to the extraordinary range of models for med. literary genres found in the Bible, incl. *hymns, *laments, *sagas, legends, genealogy, letters, contracts, biographies, *proverbs, *riddles, parables, epistles, and sermons. Jauss also finds in med. genres, such as the courtly lyric, signs of the coming great shifts in the perceived purposiveness and autonomy of literary genres.

Indeed, with the later rediscovery of Aristotle's *Poetics* came not only a rededication to perceived cl. norms and a consequent sense of the impropriety and even alterity of med. "mixed" genres but a radical reinterpretation—really, as we have seen, a misreading—of the *Poetics* itself. The nonrepresentational genres—Genette calls them "a cloud of small forms"—that were effectively ignored by Aristotle as neither narrative nor dramatic became an increasingly important aggregate in Ren. genre theory and beyond. They were, as Genette observes, assimilated or promoted in two ways: first, by reclassifying nonimitative

genres (those that imitate no action but merely express the poet's thoughts and feelings) as being in their own way imitative of the activities of thinking and feeling; second, and more radically, by rejecting the devaluation of the nonimitative genres and by elevating the status of their aggregative identity as "lyric" to the level of "epic" and "dramatic."

The hist. of the revaluation of genres, such as that of the ascendancy of lyric, is also a hist. of the recategorization of individual works and the reconfiguration of generic categories themselves. Lucretius's *De rerum natura* (1st c. BCE), e.g., has been variously classified as didactic epic, scientific poem, and verse sermon. Lucretius himself takes pains to justify his setting forth of Epicurean doctrine in "Pierian song," and Ren. theorists debated whether *De rerum natura* counted as "poesy" at all. Yet John Milton, like Virgil before him, found it to be an essential model for his own transformation of cosmological epic. In the late 18th c., it inspired the "poeticized science" of Erasmus Darwin. In the 19th c., Karl Marx simply classed *De rerum natura* with other philosophical treatises in his Jena dissertation, while Alfred, Lord Tennyson made Lucretius the subject of a dramatic *monologue discrediting his materialism. And Lionel Johnson's *lyric sequence, "Lucretius" (1895), opens with what one could call a Lucretian *sonnet, written, like *De rerum natura*, in hexameters.

As Johnson's sonnet helps to illustrate, the conventions of a genre may include formal, thematic, stylistic, and mimetic features: like many sonnets, it has 14 lines, it is about death, its language is elevated and meditative, and it seems to avoid direct address. Most commonly, a genre is constituted and recognized through shifting combinations, or ensembles, of such features. Deviations from the conventions of a given genre are often, as in Johnson's "Lucretius," small enough or self-conscious enough to highlight, rather than obscure, a particular text's generic resemblance to other texts. And while, generally speaking, the greater the deviation, the more attenuated the resemblance, sometimes it is, in fact, the more radical deviations—such as G. M. Hopkins's *curtal sonnets and Alexander Pushkin's *Onegin stanzas (also known as "Pushkin sonnets")—that are most effective at drawing fresh attention to the durability of received conventions.

Identifying such variations, though it may sometimes seem like a very specialized, even trivial, technical matter, has significant consequences for literary hist., crit., and theory. Shakespeare's sonnet 126, e.g., quite self-consciously stops two lines short of the conventional 14, signaling, among other things, the action of the "sickle hour" of death, referred to in line two, which cuts all love—and lovers—short. In the 1609 quarto, two pairs of italic brackets stand in for the missing (if this is a sonnet, we expect them to be there) 13th and 14th lines. But many later printings do not reproduce them. Is this sonnet unfinished? Does the typographically marked absence of the final two lines finish it? Does the absence of the brackets undo it? Either way, the perception of a gap between text and generic convention is a condition of interpretation,

not only of the poem but of the published sequence of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, to which it belongs. There are methodological consequences as well. Ignoring the typographic element means rejecting the interpretive significance of the 1609 text's nonverbal graphic elements—something to which materialist scholars would object. Accepting as a sonnet a 12-line poem embedded within a sequence of 14-line poems may call into question the integrity of the sequence. Refusing to accept a 12-line poem as a sonnet may call into question the sequence's stability and completeness.

By 1609, the sonnet was ubiquitous, and the popular *sonnet sequence was already well established as much more than a mere collection of individual poems. From their Dantean and Petrarchan models, both Philip Sidney and Shakespeare had learned a self-conscious style that begged—and sometimes beggared—the question of the relation between text-sequence and event-sequence. Structural ambiguity also helped blur the distinction between factual and fictional accounts, between author and persona. Later sonnet sequences, from John Donne's to Marilyn Hacker's, have continued to be written and read as implicit or explicit meditations, not only on autobiography but on narrative as such, and on the possible relation of nonnarrative or counternarrative poetry to themes of religious devotion, erotic love, and psychological interiority. Vikram Seth's *The Golden Gate* (1986), a book composed entirely of Pushkin sonnets, was very successfully marketed as a novel, prompting some to lament the further narrativization of all lit., while others celebrated the way novelistic discourse disseminated this traditional poetic form among new communities of readers.

Narratives may come in all sorts of genres, from the cl. epic and the Ren. sonnet sequence to the existential drama and the psychoanalytic case study. However, most theories of narrative and narrativity focus chiefly on literary fiction, esp. the novel. From the perspective of the present, the novel has become for many a *synecdoche for genre as such (cf. McKeon). When students in contemp. lit. classrooms refer to *Hamlet* or *The Waste Land* as a "novel," they are not necessarily making a simple category error but rather reflecting a broad cultural and critical shift toward treating the novel as paradigmatic of all that is interesting and dynamic in what Bourdieu calls the "literary field." Bakhtin's theory of the novel's exceptionality among other genres prompts his claim that lit. in the mod. era has undergone a process of "novelization." Not that other genres have grown to resemble novels in their features but that the nature of the novel— its status as the only "uncompleted" genre, its distinctive structural relation to the present, its fundamental plasticity, and its devotion to public autocritique—"sparks the renovation of all other genres . . . infects them with its spirit of process and inconclusiveness . . . implies their liberation from all that serves as a brake on their unique development" (Bakhtin 1981).

This remedial prescription for further generic devel. finds its counterpart in the wish to dispense altogether with the genre concept in literary analysis—a wish that had been gaining critical force since the 18th c. (cf. Schlegel) but that reached its furthest extreme

in Croce's insistence that genre is a useless and even dangerous abstraction that draws attention away from each individual text's notable singularity, on which its aesthetic value, in Croce's view, depends. But Jauss and many others have given the lie to Croce's impossibly absolutist view of expressive singularity. For to be even minimally intelligible, any text, any expressive act, must refer to some set of conventions or norms against which its singularity can be noted and its novelty measured.

Post-Crocean reassertions and refutations of the meaningfulness and utility of the concept of genre are extremely diverse, ranging from Crane's neo-Aristotelianism, to Jakobson's emphasis on ling. structures and Bakhtin's on "speech genres," to Burke's posing of genres as frames of symbolic adjustment, to the competing anthropological structuralisms of Frye and Todorov, to Jauss's historical-systems model, to Miller's situational pragmatics, to Jameson's historical materialism, to Kristeva's *intertextuality, to Nelson's psychoanalytic reflections on genre as repetition compulsion, to Altman's work on film genres and Holt's on genre and popular music, to the reflexive questioning of critical genres in Stewart, Jackson, and Poovey. The diversity, sophistication, and ongoingness of such work testify to the stickiness of genre, not just as a concept that will not be shaken off but as that which provides the necessary traction for the mediation of literary and social discourse.

See CONVENTION, CRITICISM, KIND, VERSE AND PROSE.

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M. CAVITCH

GEORGIA, POETRY OF. A written Georgian lit. starts with the beginning of the Christian era (4th c.). The earliest poetic forms are *psalms and *hymns, initially trans. from Gr. Over the next four or five centuries, Georgian monks, priests, and biblical scholars created an impressive body of ecclesiastical poetry. Ioane-Zosime (10th c.) was a tireless liturgical scholar, writer, translator, and poet, and the likely author of the hymn "Kebai da dibeai kartulisa enisai" (Praise and Glory to the Georgian Language), which suggests that Christ, in his Second Coming, will address the faithful in Georgian. Gradually, spiritual songs acquired more secular coloring, evolving into *lyric poems. From the early med. period to the beginning of the 20th c., poetry persists as the predominant mode of literary expression.

In the 11th and 12th cs., narrative poems emerged as the major genre of Georgian poetry. It reached its peak in the 12th c., under Queen Tamar (1184–1213). Among the distinguished poets of her court were Chkhrukhadze, Ioane Shavteli, and Shota Rustaveli; the last is acknowledged as the greatest master of Georgian poetic art. His epic poem *Vepkhis tqaosani* (*The Man in the Panther's Skin*) recounts the adventures of a young prince who aids his friend in search of his beloved, captured by devils. The poem's exceptional richness of vocabulary, powerful images, exquisite *alliterations, and complex rhyming are unsurpassed in Georgian poetry.

Rustaveli's poem became a paradigm for poets of the following four centuries, which mark a low point in the devel. of Georgian poetry. The themes and plots of *The Man in the Panther's Skin* are imitated in lyric and narrative poems alike. In the 16th and 17th cs., several Georgian kings distinguished themselves as poets. King Teimuraz I (1588–1662) translated Persian love poems, giving them a distinctly Georgian flavor. He also wrote an epic poem *Tsameba ketevan dedoplisa* (The Martyrdom of Queen Ketevan) dedicated to his mother,